

Acknowledgements

I thank Bob Dowsett for suggesting that the type-locality be clarified and for his comments on a list of type-specimens in ZMB. My visit to Berlin was made possible by funding from the Global Biodiversity Information Facility, Denmark. I thank Sylke Frahnert at ZMB for working space and access to the bird collection there.

References

- Clancey, P. A. (ed.) 1980. *SAOS checklist of southern African birds*. South Afr. Orn. Soc., Johannesburg.
- Clancey, P. A. 1984. Geographical variation and post-breeding dispersal in Temminck's Courser of the Afrotropics. *Gerfaut* 74: 361–374.
- Clancey, P. A. 1989. The status of (*Cursorius temminckii*) *damarensis* Reichenow, 1901. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 109: 51–53.
- Dickinson, E. C. (ed.) 2003. *The Howard & Moore complete checklist of the birds of the world*. Third edn. Christopher Helm, London
- Hockey, P. A. R., Dean, W. R. J. & Ryan, P. G. (eds.) 2005. *Roberts' birds of southern Africa*. Seventh edn. John Voelcker Bird Book Fund, Cape Town.
- Lundevall, C.-F. & Ångermarck, W. 1989. *Fåglar från Namibia*. Älvsborgs Länsmuseum, Vänersborg.
- Peters, J. L. 1934. *Check-list of birds of the world*, vol. 2. Harvard Univ. Press, Cambridge, MA.
- Reichenow, A. 1900. *Die Vogel Afrikas*, vol. 1. O. Neumann, Neudamm.
- Sclater, W. L. 1924. *Systema Avium Æthiopicarum*. British Ornithologists' Union, London.
- Urban, E. K., Fry C. H. & Keith, S. (eds.) 1986. *The birds of Africa*, vol. 2. Academic Press, London.
- White, C. M. N. 1965. *A revised check list of African non-passerine birds*. Government Printer, Lusaka.

Address: DST/NRF Centre of Excellence at the Percy FitzPatrick Institute of African Ornithology, University of Cape Town, Rondebosch, 7701 South Africa, e-mail: lycium@telkomsa.net

© British Ornithologists' Club 2006

Is the bulbul *Phyllastrephus lorenzi* a good species?

by Lincoln D. C. Fishpool

Received 13 January 2006

Sassi's Olive Greenbul *Phyllastrephus lorenzi* Sassi, 1914, is a poorly known bulbul (Pycnonotidae) of apparently limited distribution. Originally described from a specimen collected at Moera, near Beni, in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, the relatively few subsequent records have been confined to forests of this region, with one from adjacent western Uganda. Almost all records refer to collected material, such that virtually nothing is known of the bird in life. So far as I am aware, there are 44 specimens in museums (Table 1). In the course of preparing the bulbul family account for the *Handbook of the birds of the world* (Fishpool & Tobias 2005), I examined 40 of these. As a result, I have come to the conclusion that *P. lorenzi* is almost certainly not a valid species but is, rather, synonymous with the widespread Icterine Greenbul *P. icterinus*, of which it is possibly a melanic morph. I present here the morphological evidence that has led me to this conclusion together with distributional and other data consistent with such a view.

Morphology

A brief description of *P. lorenzi* is as follows; forehead olive-brown, top of head from forecrown to nape variably mottled black and olive, blackest on crown, sometimes appearing as a well-defined cap, in other specimens merely as a less distinct darker area, limited to the hindcrown. Upperparts dark dull olive-brown, uppertail-coverts slightly more rufous, tail dark reddish brown. Throat olive-yellow, rest of underparts dirty yellowish olive-green, paler olive-yellow in centre of belly, with brownish-yellow undertail-coverts. Wings blackish brown. Bill also blackish brown, with lower mandible, cutting edges and tips paler, eye dark brown, legs greyish, greyish brown or blackish. Sexes are alike though, as in the rest of the genus, females average smaller. Fig. 1 presents what is, I believe, the first published photograph of a live bird.

The diagnostic morphological character of *P. lorenzi* is the black crown patch or cap, which is unique amongst *Phyllastrephus*. This apart, it resembles *P. icterinus* in plumage but is darker overall, with green largely replacing the yellow on the underparts of the latter, particularly the throat and belly (Fig. 2). Above, crown excepted, they are alike except that *icterinus* averages somewhat paler and shows some contrast between the rufous uppertail-coverts and rump and the olive-green of the back; *lorenzi* is more uniform olive-green washed ginger throughout, the rufous tint increasing somewhat towards the tail. Bare-part colours are similar, though the eye of *icterinus* is paler, being grey-brown or greyish.

Examination of skins of *lorenzi* reveals that the amount and intensity of black on the crown vary considerably, from extensive, bold and well defined to being confined to the hindcrown, relatively faint and merging with the olive-green coloration of the rest of the head and neck. Further, inspection of a large series of *icterinus* from eastern DR Congo, many from the *same* collecting localities as *lorenzi*, shows that the crown coloration of these is also variable, with some showing clearly perceptible black, whilst others have little or none. Thus, the two forms intergrade in this character, supposedly *lorenzi*'s most distinctive feature (Fig. 3).

It has been suggested, or at least hinted, that variation in the amount black on the crown of *lorenzi* may be age- or sex-related. Thus, Chapin (1953) states that 'the dull blackish area in the middle of the crown is well marked in both sexes, and the specimen from Ukaika with poorly developed blackish area is undoubtedly an immature male.' The Ukaika specimen is one of Sassi's two original skins and is explicitly stated by him (Sassi 1914, 1915, 1916) both to have less black on the crown than the other (male) skin, the type, and to be female; on what basis Chapin concluded it was male is unclear. Chapin seems to be implying that the crown darkens with maturity; it certainly appears that Keith (1992) understood him to have meant so since he says that the immature 'is like adult but blackish area of crown poorly developed.'

The greater number of skins now available reveal that the black crown patch may be as dark and extensive in adult females as it is in any male whilst, equally,

TABLE 1
Phyllastrephus lorenzi specimen, locality and altitude data

Locality	Locality no. on Fig. 1	Map reference	Repository	Catalogue number	Date of collection	Sex	No. of specimens	Altitude ^a	Reference
Examined material									
Democratic Republic of Congo									
<i>Eastern (Orientale) Province</i>									
Bambesa	1	03°28'N, 25°44'E	RMCA	42.742	14/03/1941	M	1	-	
Bondo-Mabe	2	02°36'N, 29°34'E	RMCA	18.895	27/07/1925	M	1	-	
Lima	5	00°54'N, 29°13'E	RMCA	101.238	18/03/1959	M	5	-	
"	"	"	RMCA	102.319	20/07/1959	M	-		
"	"	"	RMCA	102.536	25/07/1959	F	-		
"	"	"	RMCA	102.318	27/07/1959	F	-		
"	"	"	RMCA	102.331	07/09/1959	M	-		
Lalya (Lima)	6	00°52'N, 29°14'E	RMCA	106.132	06/06/1960	M	1	-	
Djuma	7	00°43'N, 29°40'E	IRSNB	50788	23/08/1954	M	1	800 m	
Manzali	8	00°42'N, 29°31'E	IRSNB	34575	30/06/1951	M	1	1,100 m	
Etâetu	11	00°18'N, 28°32'E	RMCA	106.134*	23/04/1960	F	1	-	
<i>Kivu Province</i>									
Hombo	12	01°52'S, 28°27'E	RMCA	122.891	23/05/1970	M	1	920 m	
Lukigi	13	02°48'S, 28°22'E	RMCA	118.869	02/03/1969	M	2	1,820 m (see text)	
"	"	"	RMCA	118.870	06/03/1969	F	1	1,300 m	
Itabe	14	03°00'S, 28°15'E	IRSNB	69190*	16/03/1985	M	3	1,030 m	
"	"	"	IRSNB	69189	16/03/1985	F	1	1,030 m	
"	"	"	IRSNB	69191	16/03/1985	M	1	1,030 m	
Migamba	15	03°00'S, 27°59'E	IRSNB	69188	06/04/1985	M	2	1,090 m	
"	"	"	IRSNB	69140	20/09/1984	F	1	1,000 m	
Kiloboze	16	03°03'S, 28°09'E	RMCA	76.22.A.48	11/04/1975	F	6	1,030 m	
"	"	"	RMCA	80.24.A.60	02/08/1979	M	1	1,060 m	
"	"	"	RMCA	77.14.A.46	09/03/1976	F	-		
"	"	"	IRSNB	64730	17/03/1981	F	1	1,030 m	
"	"	"	IRSNB	64732	11/03/1981	F	1	1,020 m	
"	"	"	NHM	1984.10.10*	19/03/1981	M	1	1,020 m	
Kamituga	17	03°04'S, 28°11'E	RMCA	93.485	04/06/1958	F	3	1,060-1,100 m	Prigogine (1971)
"	"	"	RMCA	57.773*	23/02/1951	M	1		
"	"	"	RMCA	57.772	07/07/1951	F	1		
Kakanda	18	03°11'S, 28°20'E	RMCA	103.005	14/08/1954	F	2	1,180 & 1,270 m	Prigogine (1971)
"	"	"	RMCA	103.006	16/08/1959	M	1		
Nyabisanda	19	03°11'S, 28°22'E	RMCA	84.336	19/06/1951	F	1	1,300 m	
Kanyaa	20	03°24'S, 28°12'E	RMCA	119.230	17/05/1969	F	1	-	
Mandza / Mandja	21	03°27'S, 28°21'E	RMCA	84.337	06/10/1956	F	1	1,360 m	Prigogine (1971)
Lumbokwe	22	03°33'S, 28°10'E	IRSNB	69864	19/05/1987	M	1	1,060 m	
Kiliza	23	03°42'S, 28°10'E	RMCA	113.842	24/01/1966	M	1	1,580 m	
Mwenge	24	03°42'S, 28°10'E	RMCA	115.215	17/02/1967	F	1	1,540 m	
Kitongo	25	03°46'S, 28°11'E	RMCA	111.114	10/06/1964	M	2	1,390 m	
"	"	"	RMCA	111.115	12/06/1964	F	1	1,470 m	
Mbutaba	Undetermined	"	IRSNB	68679	24/09/1984	M	2	925 m	
"	"	"	IRSNB	68680	03/10/1984	F	1	925 m	

Unexamined material

Democratic Republic of Congo

Eastern (Oriental) Province

Simbo	4	01°31'N, 29°30'E	NRM	22/06/1921	F	1		Gyldenstolpe (1924)
Moera (Sikwakira) [type]	9	00°38'N, 29°32'E	NMW	Aug 1910	M	1		Sassi (1914, 1915, 1916)
Ukaika	10	00°36'N, 28°51'E	NMW	Jan 1911	F	1		Sassi (1914, 1915, 1916)
Uganda								
Ntandi	26	00°48'N, 30°09'E	NHMLAC	17/06/1967	F	1	700 m	Friedmann & Williams (1968, 1971)

Total 44

Field record

Democratic Republic of Congo

Eastern (Oriental) Province

Apharama	3	01°33'N, 28°32'E		Feb-Mar 1996	?	3	800 m	Plumptre & Mutungire (1996), Plumptre (1997)
----------	---	------------------	--	--------------	---	---	-------	--

* = aberrantly plumaged individuals; see text

†(label data unless reference given)

Note: Localities 23 (Kiliza) and 24 (Mwenge) are given the same map reference by Prigogine (1971) although the map in Prigogine (1978) shows them to be in slightly different locations. The map reference for locality 20, Kanyaa, is given by Prigogine (1971) as 03°54'S, 28°12'E, whilst from the map in Prigogine (1978) it is clear that this should read 03°24'S, 28°12'E. Schouteden (1969:16) uses the name Kibongo for one of Prigogine's collection localities of *P. lorentzi*, apparently in error for Kitongo, locality 25.

Repositories: IRSNB = Institut Royal des Sciences Naturelles de Belgique, Brussels; RMCA = Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren; NHM = Natural History Museum, Tring; NHMLAC = Natural History Museum, Los Angeles County; NRM = Naturhistoriska Riksmuseet, Stockholm; NMW = Naturhistorisches Museum, Vienna.

TABLE 2

Mean measurements in mm (\pm standard error) of bill-, tarsus-, wing- and tail-lengths of *Phyllastrephus lorentzi* and *P. icterinus*. *P* = probabilities associated with Student's t-Test (two-tailed, two-sample equal variance). All *icterinus* skins are from eastern DR Congo; all male and all but three female skins from the same collection localities as *lorentzi*. Bill measurements are of exposed culmen, wing of unflattened chord. *Phyllastrephus* bulbuls are sexually dimorphic in size, with males averaging larger than females; data for each sex are therefore presented separately.

	Bill	Tarsus	Wing	Tail
Males				
<i>P. lorentzi</i> n=22 (bill n=21)	15.55 \pm 0.17	18.47 \pm 0.12	74.63 \pm 0.70	68.93 \pm 0.55
<i>P. icterinus</i> n=20	15.34 \pm 0.14	18.25 \pm 0.11	74.87 \pm 0.62	70.25 \pm 0.47
<i>p</i>	0.345	0.191	0.807	0.074
Females				
<i>P. lorentzi</i> n=18 (tail n=16)	14.28 \pm 0.11	17.99 \pm 0.17	69.62 \pm 0.48	63.24 \pm 0.83
<i>P. icterinus</i> n=20	14.01 \pm 0.15	17.73 \pm 0.18	68.47 \pm 0.52	63.62 \pm 0.49
<i>p</i>	0.163	0.303	0.116	0.680

the patch may be reduced in adults of either sex. Two males held in IRSNB, Brussels (see Table 1 for explanation of acronyms), nos. 69190 and 69191 from Itabe, appear to be immatures; the tips of the rectrices are more pointed than in other specimens, the gape of specimen 69190 shows evidence of a relatively large flange, whilst label data indicate both had very small testes. The crown patch is not well marked in either but some black feathering is apparent throughout, including on the forecrown; both specimens have also lost some crown feathering, apparently during preparation. Whilst not entirely convincing, this appears to indicate that immatures may show some black coloration across the entire crown. If, however, the size and / or intensity of the black patch were to increase with maturity, *lorenzi* would be unique in the genus in showing such a large difference between immature and adult plumages.

In size *lorenzi* and *icterinus* are extremely similar. Comparisons of bill-, tarsus, wing- and tail-lengths of *lorenzi* skins with a series of *icterinus*, the latter mostly collected from the same localities as *lorenzi*, reveal no statistically significant morphometric differences between them in either sex (Table 2).

Overall, therefore, the two species appear to differ only in the degree of melanin in the plumage and the irides with *lorenzi* consistently darker, particularly below. The similarities are obvious when one compares the photograph of *lorenzi* (Fig. 1), taken at Apharama, Ituri (Plumtre & Mutungire 1996, Plumtre 1997) with a living example of *icterinus* from Mt Hoyo, also in Ituri, published in Lippens & Wille (1976). The latter shows perceptible darkening on the fore- and midcrown which approaches those of some *lorenzi* specimens.

Of the 40 skins I have examined, four (denoted in Table 1) are aberrant to varying degrees and with differing patterns, such that they show irregular warm brown feathering variously on the crown, mantle, back, wing-coverts, breast-sides and lower flanks (Fig. 4). Three also have pale legs; legs of 'normally' plumaged birds are dark. These same three specimens appear fully adult; on the basis of testes sizes indicated on the original label, the NHM specimen certainly is. This skin was obtained through exchange with IRSNB and bears a crude, grey-green handwritten label with the male symbol and the figures '5×4 6×4' written on it. M. Louette (pers. comm.) has confirmed that this is the sort of label used by Prigogine's local collectors in Itombwe, Kivu, whence this specimen comes, and that the data do refer to testes measurements.

Distribution and altitudinal range

The range of *P. lorenzi*, based on skins plus an additional recent field record supported by photographs, is shown in Fig. 5. Records are concentrated in the Ituri and Semliki forest areas of Eastern (=Orientale) Province of eastern DR Congo, plus one specimen from adjacent Bwamba in Uganda. There is also a record from Hombo, west of Mt Kahuzi, slightly north of the remainder in south Kivu, centred around Kamituga, in Itombwe. With the notable exception of a single outlying record from Bambesa, in the west of Eastern Province, the distribution of *lorenzi* is



Figure 1 (left). Sassi's Olive Greenbul *Phyllastrephus lorentzi*, Apharama, Ituri, DR Congo, February/ March 1996 (Andrew Plumptre)

Figure 2 (below). Ventral view of two Icterine Greenbuls *Phyllastrephus icterinus* (LHS) [specimen nos. 69172 and 71116, both males] and two *P. lorentzi* (RHS) [specimen nos. 68680, female, and 68679, male], all from Itombwe, Kivu, DR Congo. IRSNB, Brussels, April 2005 (Lincoln Fishpool)





Figure 3. Frontal views of two *Phyllastrephus icterinus* (LHS) [specimen nos. 69172 and 71116, both males] and two *P. lorenzi* (RHS) [specimen nos. 68680, female, and 68679, male], all from Itombwe, Kivu, DR Congo, showing variation in degree of black coloration on crown. IRSNB, Brussels, April 2005 (Lincoln Fishpool)



Figure 4. Dorsal view of *Phyllastrephus lorenzi* [specimen no. 1984.10.10] showing abnormal rufous coloration. NHM, Tring, July 2004 (Lincoln Fishpool © Natural History Museum, Tring)

therefore almost entirely confined to a narrow band fringing the western edge of the mountains of the central Albertine Rift. Prigogine (1980) pointed out that all records from Kivu then known were limited to a strip 15–25 km wide; though subsequent collecting has broadened this somewhat, Prigogine’s point remains valid. With a total distribution estimated at less than 50,000 km², *lorenzi* is considered a species of restricted range, confined to the Eastern DR Congo Lowlands Endemic Bird Area (Stattersfield *et al.* 1998), and was assessed as Near Threatened by Collar & Stuart (1985) in which category it remains (BirdLife International 2006).

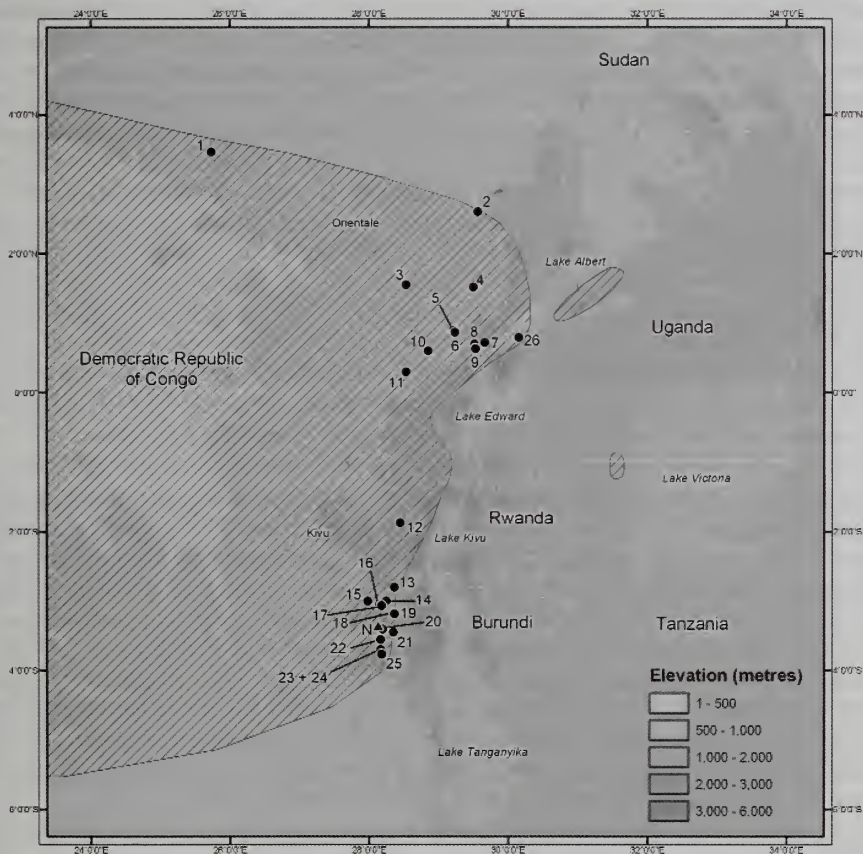


Figure 5. Map showing location of specimen and field records of *Phyllastrephus lorenzi*. Hatching indicates approximate distribution of *P. icterinus* in eastern DR Congo, Uganda and Tanzania. Details of numbered localities are given in Table 1. Solid triangle labelled ‘N’ indicates location of Nyamupe, site of the holotype of *Andropadus hallae*—see text. Altitude data from GLOBE Digital Elevation Model, Version 1.0. Database available at: www.ngdc.noaa.gov/mgg/topo/globe.html.

The geographic range of *lorenzi* is entirely coincident with that of the common and widespread Icterine Greenbul *P. icterinus* (Fig. 5), which extends throughout Upper and Lower Guinea and the Congo Basin forests east to parts of western and southern Uganda and north-west Tanzania (Keith 1992, Baker & Baker 2001, Carswell *et al.* 2005).

P. lorenzi is considered a species of the transition (mid altitude) and lower montane forest zones (Prigogine 1971, 1978, 1980, Keith 1992); its altitudinal range is given by Prigogine (1971), repeated by Keith (1992), as 1,060–1,820 m. As such, it appears to be found significantly higher than *icterinus*, the altitudinal limits of which are said to be sea level to 1,250 m (Keith 1992). These figures imply relatively little overlap. The range limits of both forms, however, demand revision. Thus, in Itombwe, Prigogine (1971, 1978) records *icterinus* to 1,420 m—the record from 1,430 m mentioned in Prigogine (1971) is corrected in Prigogine (1984) as referring to Xavier's Greenbul *P. xavieri*. For *lorenzi*, from specimens for which altitude is included on label data, and from information in the literature, a more accurate assessment of range appears to be 700–1,580 m (Table 1). The lower figure comes from Friedmann & Williams (1968, 1971), where it appears as 2,300 ft. Inspection of map contour data for specimen localities for which no altitudes are given suggests, however, that the outlying, westernmost record from Bambesa is lower still, nearer 600 m. At the upper extreme, there is a single record from 1,820 m, from Lukigi in Itombwe (RMCA specimen no. 118.869, collected 2 March 1969) and which is the reason for the claim that *lorenzi* occurs in the lower montane zone. This skin, along with all others from Itombwe, results from Prigogine's collections. The altitude data given in the associated publications (Prigogine 1971, 1984) are consistent with the labels of his specimens, including that putatively from 1,820 m. This figure, however, appears anomalous for several reasons. Altitudinal information is given on label data and/or in publications for 30 specimens, as well as for the recent field record; of these, 26 are from below 1,400 m, with one each from 1,470 m, 1,540 m and 1,580 m (Table 1). The specimen from 1,820 m is therefore exceptional. The detailed map of Itombwe in Prigogine (1978, 1980), however, shows Lukigi to be well below this altitude and, indeed, at some distance (*c.* 8 km at the nearest point) from the 1,500 m contour. The map also shows other named localities to be closer to this contour than is Lukigi. There is a second *lorenzi* specimen from Lukigi in RMCA (no. 118.870 taken 6 March 1969), said to be from 1,300 m, a height consistent with the map. It is tempting therefore to infer that the figure of 1,820 m may be incorrect, perhaps a transposition error for 1,280 m, or possibly 1,320 m, with a poorly formed 3 misconstrued as an 8.

There are, however, a number of skins of other taxa from Lukigi in RMCA, of which several also apparently come from well above 1,500 m, which appear to rule out a simple *lapsus calami*. On the other hand, one at least of these also seems questionable, since it is of an otherwise lowland species: a Crested Malimbe *Malimbus malimbicus* (no. 118.879 taken 8 March 1969) from 1,930 m. This altitude, also published in Prigogine (1971), is, on the basis of data in Fry (2004),

400–500 m higher than otherwise recorded for the species. (This anomalously high record is not, in fact, mentioned by Fry (*loc. cit.*), which appears to be a deliberate omission, since the account, explicitly using other data from Prigogine (1971), states that *M. malimbicus* is ‘very common in Itombwe at 580–1,490 m.’) The collection dates of all the Lukigi material are within a few days of the *lorenzi* specimens but they bear no local collector’s labels and M. Louette informs me that, frustratingly, RMCA does not hold the volume of Prigogine’s field diary for this period.

It should be borne in mind that much of Prigogine’s collecting was undertaken by his assistants in his absence and therefore there may be some uncertainty as to accuracy of the associated data. Although this matter cannot be resolved, I suggest that sufficient doubt remains over the 1,820 m *lorenzi* record for it at least to require confirmation. If discounted, the difference in the upper altitudinal limits between *lorenzi* and *icterinus* in Itombwe reduces to 160 m, whilst the extent of overlap is considerable.

Behaviour

The few field observations of *lorenzi* could equally well apply to the much better known *icterinus*. Thus, it is reported to occur in small groups in the lower and middle strata and to join mixed-species flocks, behaviour consonant with that of *icterinus* (Keith 1992). Prigogine (1971) states that *lorenzi* ‘moves slowly allowing good views of cap’ implying that it is not a skulker, unlike most congeners, but like *icterinus* (and *P. xavieri*).

Discussion

In addition to the localities mapped in Fig. 5, *lorenzi* has been reported from two further areas in eastern DR Congo in the literature, but I have been unable to find corroborating evidence for either. Thus, Prigogine states that, as well as the ‘forests west of Lake Kivu’ (which includes Hombo, locality 12 on Fig. 5) and Itombwe, *lorenzi* also occurs in Ruwenzori and the ‘forests west of Lake Edward’ (Prigogine 1985). The basis for the claims for these latter areas is unclear and they are contradicted by Dowsett (1985) in the same volume. However, Collar & Stuart (1988) and Demey & Louette (2001), apparently following Prigogine (1985), also reported *lorenzi* in the forests west of Lake Edward, whilst Pedersen & Languy (1994) included it in their avian checklist of Virunga National Park, which includes much of Ruwenzori. Besides the documented record from Apharama in Ituri (locality 3), further sightings have been reported from here, as well as from Epulu some 20 km to the south (Dejairve 1989, Sacchi 1997), but no supplementary details are given.

If *lorenzi* and *icterinus* are so similar in appearance why has this not been recognised before? Undoubtedly, paucity of material and, especially, of field experience of *lorenzi* has contributed; the records of Plumtre & Mutungire (1996)

and Plumptre (1997) are the only ones published, as far as I am aware, concerning live birds. In museum trays the black crown of *lorenzi* marks it as distinct within a genus not noted for its variety or boldness of coloration. Chapin (1953), on the basis of the only three skins known to him, did acknowledge that '*P. lorenzi* is somewhat like *P. icterinus* in general form, but more greenish below and more washed with brownish above.' This observation does not seem to have prompted further enquiry.

Indeed, Hall & Moreau (1970) included *lorenzi* in their Baumann's Greenbul *Phyllastrephus baumanni* superspecies, along with Toro Olive Greenbul *P. hypochloris* (as a subspecies of *baumanni*) and Cameroon Olive Greenbul *P. poensis*. Their basis for doing so is not entirely clear—the sole specimen of *lorenzi* in NHM was not obtained until 1984, so it is possible that Hall & Moreau's judgment was not based on an examination of skins—since they merely state that 'they are all small and dark with shorter bills than other members of the genus.' They also state that *lorenzi* 'is like *P. baumanni* but has a black patch on the crown (darker than that of *poensis*).' However, the implication here, that *P. poensis* has a dark crown patch, is misleading since although the crown and nape of *poensis* average darker olive-brown than the rest of the upperparts, the effect is in no way comparable to the black crown patch of 'typical' *lorenzi*. Prigogine (1980), moreover, demonstrated that *lorenzi* is sympatric with *hypochloris* in Itombwe and therefore they cannot be members of the same superspecies and also showed that *lorenzi* is distinctly shorter tailed than *hypochloris*. He does say though that the two '*forment un groupe d'espèces*.' What is clear from more recent knowledge is that there is no possibility of a close relationship, morphologically, ecologically or vocally, between the large *P. baumanni* and *P. hypochloris* on the one hand and the small *P. icterinus* on the other (Keith 1992, Fishpool 2000, Fishpool & Tobias 2005).

The differences in coloration between *lorenzi* and *icterinus* do seem to be explicable in terms of melanism. It is tempting to speculate that the black on the crown may be an instance of acromelanism, wherein the cooler parts of the body, including the top of the head, are more heavily pigmented than the warmer parts; environmental temperature can be a determining factor in this (van Grouw 2006). Such supposition aside, the fact is that studies have shown that whilst the genetic basis for melanism is the same in a range of distantly related birds, the effects of the single locus concerned on patterning is extremely varied (Mundy 2005). On the basis of the evidence presented here, H. van Grouw (*in litt.* 2006) considers plausible the idea that *lorenzi* is a melanic morph of *icterinus*; the darker eye colour of *lorenzi* is also consistent with melanism (van Grouw 2006).

In addition to the considerable degree of variation in the amount of black on the crown in *lorenzi*, it is curious that the plumage of four of the 44 known specimens differs in showing varying amounts of contrasting rufous coloration, not distributed to any consistent pattern. Whether these aberrant specimens are also a manifestation of melanism—the phenomenon of phaecomelanism results in increases in reddish-brown pigments (van Grouw 2006)—or has an unrelated explanation is unknown.

The single specimen in NHM is one of these (Fig. 4), and because it has been used to illustrate the bird in a number of standard works (Keith 1992, Stevenson & Fanshawe 2000, Sinclair & Ryan 2003), this has had the unfortunate consequence of giving an inaccurate impression of *lorenzi* relative to the majority of specimens (including, on the basis of the illustration and description in Sassi (1916), the type), particularly in the large brown patch on the hindcrown, which is a feature of this skin alone.

If *lorenzi* should prove to be a melanic form, an interesting parallel is provided by the case of *Andropadus hallae*, which was described from a single specimen collected in 1970 from Nyamupe, Itombwe (Fig. 5), at an altitude of 990 m (Prigogine 1972). Whilst recognising that this individual resembled the sympatric Little Greenbul *A. virens*, Prigogine (*loc. cit.*) pointed out that it differed by having 'a generally more dark colour of plumage' as well as having 'a blackish beak, a tarsus and feet equally blackish.' Prigogine's detailed plumage description highlights the overall dark olive-green coloration of the plumage and emphasises the lack of yellow tones typical of *virens*. In addition, though no size differences were found, *hallae* differed from *virens* in having a less graduated tail. After comparing this specimen with over 1,000 skins of *virens* Prigogine decided that it was sufficiently different to merit description as a species. As, however, subsequent collection in the area failed to reveal any further specimens, Prigogine, quoted in Keith (1992), came to believe the bird to be a melanic specimen of *virens*, a treatment adopted by subsequent authors.

Though confirmation (or otherwise) of my belief that *P. lorenzi* is a form, possibly a melanic one, of *P. icterinus* must await further study, particularly of vocal, behavioural and molecular data, I suggest that sufficient evidence is available to cast serious doubt on the specific status of Sassi's Olive Greenbul. As it is currently considered a species of global conservation concern, classified as Near Threatened (BirdLife International 2006), such a change of status potentially has practical implications, as and when circumstances in the region should permit conservation activities to resume.

Acknowledgements

I thank Michel Louette, RMCA, Tervuren, Georges Lenglet & René-Marie Lafontaine, IRSNB, Brussels, and Robert Prÿs-Jones, NHM, Tring, for access to skins and Dr Louette for additional information. I also thank Andrew Plumtre of the Wildlife Conservation Society for permission to use his photograph and for supplementary details relating to his field record, Hein van Grouw and Nick Mundy for information and advice on melanism, Stuart Butchart and Claire Spottiswoode for statistical advice, Nigel Collar, Robert Dowsett, Françoise Dowsett-Lemaire, Ron Demey and Jeremy Lindsell for comments on the manuscript, and Mark Balman for preparing the map.

References:

- Baker, N. E. & Baker, L. M. 2001. Tanzania. Pp. 897–945 in Fishpool, L. D. C. & Evans, M. I. (eds.) *Important Bird Areas in Africa and associated islands: priority sites for conservation*. Pisces Publications, Newbury & BirdLife International, Cambridge, UK.
- BirdLife International. 2006. Species factsheet: *Phyllastrephus lorenzi*. www.birdlife.org (accessed 30 August 2006).

- Carswell, M., Pomeroy, D., Reynolds, J. & Tushabe, H. 2005. *The bird atlas of Uganda*. British Ornithologists' Club & British Ornithologists' Union, Oxford.
- Chapin, J. P. 1953. The birds of the Belgian Congo. Part 3. *Bull. Amer. Mus. Nat. Hist.* 75A: 1–821.
- Collar, N. J. & Stuart, S. N. 1985. *Threatened birds of Africa and related islands*. International Council for Bird Preservation, Cambridge, UK.
- Collar, N. J. & Stuart, S. N. 1988. *Key forests for threatened birds in Africa*. International Council for Bird Preservation, Cambridge, UK.
- Demey, R. & Louette, M. 2001. Democratic Republic of Congo. Pp. 199–218 in Fishpool, L. D. C. & Evans, M. I. (eds.) *Important Bird Areas in Africa and associated islands: priority sites for conservation*. Pisces Publications, Newbury & BirdLife International, Cambridge, UK.
- Dejaivre, P. A. 1989. Esquisse de l'avifaune de la forêt de l'Ituri, nord-est du Zaïre. Unpubl. rep.
- Dowsett, R. J. 1985. The conservation of tropical forest birds in central and southern Africa. Pp. 197–212 in Diamond, A. W. & Lovejoy, T. E. (eds.) *Conservation of tropical forest birds*. International Council for Bird Preservation, Cambridge, UK.
- Fishpool, L. D. C. 2000. A review of the status, distribution and habitat of Baumann's Greenbul *Phyllastrephus baumanni*. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 120: 213–229.
- Fishpool, L. D. C. & Tobias, J. A. 2005. Family Pycnonotidae (bulbuls). Pp. 124–250 in del Hoyo, J., Elliott, A. & Christie, D. A. (eds.) *Handbook of the birds of the world*, vol. 10. Lynx Edicions, Barcelona.
- Friedmann, H. & Williams, J. G. 1968. Notable records of rare or little-known birds from western Uganda. *Rev. Zool. Bot. Afr.* 77: 11–36.
- Friedmann, H. & Williams, J. G. 1971. The birds of the lowlands of Bwamba, Toro Province, Uganda. *Los Angeles County Mus. Contrib. Sci.* 211: 1–70.
- Fry, C. H. 2004. *Malimbus malimbicus*. Pp. 89–92 in Fry, C. H. & Keith, S. (eds.) *The birds of Africa*, vol. 7. Christopher Helm, London.
- van Grouw, H. 2006. Not every white bird is an albino: sense and nonsense about colour aberrations in birds. *Dutch Birding* 28: 79–89.
- Gyldenstolpe, N. 1924. Zoological results of the Swedish Expedition to Central Africa 1921. Vertebrata. I. Birds. *Kungl. Svenska Vetensk. Akad. Handl. Ser. 3*, 1(3).
- Hall, B. P. & Moreau, R. E. 1970. *An atlas of speciation in African passerine birds*. Brit. Mus. (Nat. Hist.), London.
- Keith, S. 1992. Family Pycnonotidae: bulbuls. Pp. 279–377 in Keith, S., Urban, E. K. & Fry, C. H. (eds.) *The birds of Africa*, vol. 4. Academic Press, London.
- Lippens, L. & Wille, H. 1976. *Les oiseaux du Zaïre*. Editions Lannoo, Tielt.
- Mundy, N. I. 2005. A window on the genetics of evolution: *MC1R* and plumage colouration in birds. *Proc. Roy. Soc. Lond. B.* 272: 1633–1640.
- Pedersen, T. & Languy, M. 1994. Checklist of birds of Virunga National Park. Unpubl. rep.
- Plumptre, A. J. 1997. Shifting cultivation along the Trans-African Highway and its impact on the understorey bird community in the Ituri Forest, Zaire. *Bird Conserv. Intern.* 7: 317–329.
- Plumptre, A. J. & Mutungire, N. 1996. The effects of disturbance from shifting cultivation on the understorey bird community in the Ituri Forest, Zaire. Unpubl. rep.
- Prigogine, A. 1971. Les oiseaux de l'Itombwe et de son hinterland. Vol. I. *Ann. Mus. Afr. Centr., 8°, Sci. zool.* 185: 1–298.
- Prigogine, A. 1972. Description of a new green bulbul from the Republic of Zaire. *Bull. Brit. Orn. Cl.* 92: 138–141.
- Prigogine, A. 1978. Les oiseaux de l'Itombwe et de son hinterland. Vol. II. *Ann. Mus. Afr. Centr., 8°, Sci. zool.* 223: 1–134.
- Prigogine, A. 1980. Etude de quelques contacts secondaires au Zaïre oriental. *Gerfaut* 70: 305–384.
- Prigogine, A. 1984. Les oiseaux de l'Itombwe et de son hinterland. Vol. III. *Ann. Mus. Afr. Centr., 8°, Sci. zool.* 243: 1–146.
- Prigogine, A. 1985. Conservation of the avifauna of the forests of the Albertine Rift. Pp. 277–295 in Diamond, A. W. & Lovejoy, T. E. (eds.) *Conservation of tropical forest birds*. International Council for Bird Preservation, Cambridge, UK.

- Sacchi, M. 1997. Avifauna of the Okapi wildlife reserve, Ituri Forest/Haut Zaïre. Annotated checklist. Unpubl. rep.
- Sassi, M. 1914. Einige neue Formen der innerafrikanischen *Ornis* aus der Kollektion Grauer. *Anz. K. Akad. Wiss., Wein., Math-Naturw. Kl.* 51: 308–312.
- Sassi, M. 1915. Einige neue Formen der innerafrikanischen *Ornis* aus der Kollektion Grauer. *J. Orn.* 63: 112–118.
- Sassi, M. 1916. Wissenschaftliche Ergebnisse der Expedition R. Grauer nach Zentral Africa Dezember 1909 bis Februar 1911. Beitrag zur *Ornis* Zentralafrikas. *Ann. K. K. Naturhist. Mus. Wien.* 30: 241–306.
- Schouteden, H. 1969. La faune ornithologique du Kivu. II. Passereaux. *Mus. Roy. Afr. Centr., Doc. Zool.* 15: 1–188.
- Sinclair, I. & Ryan, P. 2003. *Birds of Africa south of the Sahara*. Struik, Cape Town.
- Stattersfield, A. J., Crosby, M. J., Long, A. J. & Wege, D. C. 1998. *Endemic Bird Areas of the world: priority for biodiversity conservation*. BirdLife International, Cambridge, UK.
- Stevenson, T. & Fanshawe, J. 2002. *Field guide to the birds of East Africa*. T. & A. D. Poyser, London.

Address: BirdLife International, Wellbrook Court, Girton Road, Cambridge, CB3 0NA, UK, e-mail: lincoln.fishpool@birdlife.org

© British Ornithologists' Club 2006

Possible etymology of the generic name *Magumma* for the Anianiau (Drepanidini)

by Storrs L. Olson

Received 10 February 2006

The Anianiau is a small yellow bird belonging to the cardueline finch tribe Drepanidini that is endemic to the Hawaiian island of Kauai. It was first described by Stejneger (1887) as *Himatione parva*, before that genus was restricted to the Apapane *H. sanguinea*. It has since usually been associated with the amakihis and has been moved around with them in the genera *Chlorodrepanis*, *Loxops* and most recently *Hemignathus*. Other authors have been uncomfortable with this and have sought to remove the Anianiau to its own genus or at least disassociate it from amakihis. Molecular evidence supports this, as in a phylogeny derived from mtDNA sequences the species is well removed from the amakihis (Fleischer *et al.* 2001), and Pratt (2001: 81) opined that it 'should be removed from [*Hemignathus*] and placed in its own genus *Magumma*.'

In the introduction to their book on Hawaiian birds, Wilson & Evans (1899: xxi) stated: '*Himatione parva*, though having a straight bill, Mr. Perkins now wishes to keep apart from *Oreomyza*, and to place it in a genus by itself as *Rothschildia parva* ...' Richmond (1902: 713) gave the authorship of *Rothschildia* as 'Perkins in Wilson and Evans,' but Perkins (1903: 411) disavowed ever having any intention of proposing such a genus. Regardless, *Rothschildia* as it appeared in Wilson & Evans (1899) is preoccupied by *Rothschildia* Grote (1896: 204) used for a genus of